

WASHINGTON POST  
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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

THE WASHINGTON POST Monday, June 5, 1961

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# Trujillo Son Was Disappointment

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By Dreio Pearson

I well remember the first time I met Rafael Trujillo, the late dictator of the Dominican Republic. It was in the Hotel Faustus in Santo Domingo, the city near which Christopher Columbus first sighted the new world, later renamed Trujillo City by the man who so long ruled it.



Pearson

It was a hot, sultry night in August, 1931, and Trujillo had been in power not more than about a year. I had written a series of articles on him for the Baltimore Sun citing Trujillo's record for mail embezzlement, cattle thievery, and attempted assassination. The Dominican legation in Washington didn't like the articles, complained bitterly. I told the Minister I was going to the Caribbean and would be glad to talk to the dictator. I gave the exact time of my arrival.

Actually I never expected to see Trujillo. But as I sat in the hotel dining room, there was a rustle of excitement and the hotel manager conducted him to my table.

He was young and slender and handsome in those days, with flashing brown eyes. He sat down at the table as the hotel manager produced warm champagne, and we talked for nearly two hours. I have forgotten exactly what Trujillo said, and can't find the copy of my subsequent story. I do remember, however, that I described Trujillo as having "bedroom

eyes," and that this brought an even more vigorous protest from his Minister in Washington. Trujillo resented this description more than being called a cattle thief or a mail embezzler.

## Biggest Disappointment

I went back to the Dominican Republic shortly after Castro came into power in Cuba. The old Faustus was gone, and beautiful hotels lined the Caribbean waterfront. Dictator, I have found, always build beautiful hotels.

Trujillo had given a birthday party in one of these hotels. His son was invited. He came — but only for 10 minutes—then went on to a night club with two lady friends.

This highlighted Trujillo's biggest disappointment. When he sent Rafael to the Army Staff and Command School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., he expected big things. Rafael was to be trained to take over the "Republic." But Rafael spent his time and money giving mink coats and imported cars to Klm Novak and Zsa Zsa Gabor. He had an annual allowance from Papa of \$50,000, and when you have this much money to spend and have been made a colonel in the Dominican Army at the age of 8, with troops saluting you right and left, what can a father expect.

## Other Attempts

The Dominican censors hushed it up, but there had been a dozen or so attempts on Trujillo's life before the one which finally succeeded. As a result, Trujillo City was an armed camp. You could not walk down the side of the

street next the sea in front of the Hotel Jaragus without being ordered by a soldier to walk on the other side.

Trujillo, despite his braggadocio, was a very scared dictator. He always wore a bulletproof vest, despite a small holster on his left side.

He also imported 100 tough Spanish Falangists, trained by Franco's secret service, as his bodyguard.

Trujillo owned 10 villas scattered around the Dominican Republic, but he didn't even trust his own staff. When he left the capital, he would order his chauffeur to drive him to one particular villa, then, 10 miles out of the city, issue new orders to go to a different villa.

When Trujillo came to Washington, advance bodyguards arranged security precautions more elaborate than those for the President of the United States. The hotel lobby where he stayed was filled with unobtrusive plainclothesmen, one of them John Joseph Frank, a former FBI and CIA man.

## Two Ex-Congressmen

Two former Congressmen are receiving the news of Trujillo's death with opposite emotions. They are:

Ex-Congressman Charles Porter of Oregon, Democrat—who began battling against Trujillo almost from the first minute he entered Congress. He called attention to the fact that the son-in-law of John Foster Dulles was the three-month guest of the Dictator, and that Mamie Eisenhower's brother-in-law, Col. Gordon Moore, had been engaged in a business deal with Trujillo. Porter even called on his fellow Congressmen to return

the medals they received from the Dictator.

Ex-Congressman Don Jackson of California, Republican—who consistently defended Trujillo and even made a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives praising the Dominican Congress as a better parliamentary forum than the American Congress.

Jackson chose not to run for reelection. He had told friends in the Caribbean that he planned to take a house in the Dominican Republic and retire to that placid place. Now it won't be so placid.

Porter, in contrast to Jackson, kept battling away at the dictators, from Perez Jimenez in Venezuela to Franco in Spain. It didn't help him politically or financially. He was defeated last November.

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